



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Fall Forest Fire Hazard Season Ends** ***Safety Precautions Still Advised When Burning Debris***

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Dec. 16, 2014) – The fall forest fire hazard season officially ended Dec. 15, but officials with the Kentucky Division of Forestry continue to urge caution when conducting any kind of outdoor burning.

“Kentucky’s forests have weathered serious storms over the past few years and the increase in dead and fallen trees are of particular concern for fire suppression efforts,” said Leah MacSwords, director of the Division of Forestry. “We were fortunate to receive timely precipitation this fall, which kept the fire dangers low.”

Since Jan. 1, 1,399 fires have burned 40,251 acres across the state. While arson continues to be the leading cause of wildfires in Kentucky, many regions of the state showed an increase in debris fires.

Forestry officials reported the following numbers as causes for this year’s wildfires: 900 arson fires, 305 debris fires and 194 fires due to lightning, faulty equipment and other causes. The increase in debris fires is likely due to the accumulation of dead trees and limbs from storm damage. The danger of setting fire to debris piles and fence rows is often underestimated and the potential for these fires to spread to the woods is much higher than in years past due to the condition of our woods.

For more information about fire hazard seasons, outdoor burning laws and safe debris burning practices, contact the Kentucky Division of Forestry at 1-800-866-0555 or visit the division’s website at <http://forestry.ky.gov/>.

Citizens should also check with the Kentucky Division for Air Quality, the Kentucky Division of Waste Management and local agencies to ensure that you are obeying all outdoor burning laws.

**Editor’s note:** You may contact the Division of Waste Management at (502) 564-6716 and the Division for Air Quality at (502) 573-3999 for additional information about disposal alternatives and air pollution regulations.

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